



## “He’ll Stop the Bombing if Elected”

**Date:** 1968-09-30

**Conversation:** WH6809-04-13432-13433

**Participant:** Lyndon B. Johnson

**Participant:** Richard M. Nixon

**Start Time:** 18:45

**Duration:** 01:13

**Place:** Oval Office

SCENE SETTER: On 30 September 1968, Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey Jr. surprised President Johnson by announcing that, if elected president, he would halt the bombing of North Vietnam “as an acceptable risk for peace.” Republican presidential nominee Richard M. “Dick” Nixon called the White House to find out if the administration’s position on a bombing halt had changed.

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**Richard M. “Dick” Nixon:** Hello? Mr. President?

**President Johnson:** Yes.

**Nixon:** I’m awfully sorry to bother you. This is Dick Nixon.

**President Johnson:** Yes, Dick.

**Nixon:** And [*clears throat*] the only reason I bother you is that I’m going very shortly to be on a television program, and there just came over the wire this statement by Hubert [H. Humphrey Jr.] with regard to saying that he would have a bombing pause if elected. And the only purpose of my call is to determine whether there’s any change in our own policy at this time with regard to what position the administration is taking.

**President Johnson:** No, there is not. I have not read his speech; it has not been discussed with me. I say this in strict confidence.

**Nixon:** I understand.

**President Johnson:** I don’t want you to quote me or repeat me, so I’ll talk freely.

**Nixon:** [*speaking under President Johnson*] I won’t. I won’t. I’m not even letting anybody know I called you.

**President Johnson:** I have not read it. I have just had the press secretary call me with a flash that he says he’ll stop the bombing pause, but—he’ll stop the bombing *if elected*. And then it indicates

that he has to have direct, or indirect, or deed, or act assurance [*Nixon acknowledges throughout*] that they would respect the DMZ [demilitarized zone]. I don't know really what he is saying.

*End of excerpt.*

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CITATION: "Lyndon B. Johnson, Richard M. Nixon, James R. 'Jim' Jones, and Walt W. Rostow on 30 September 1968," Conversation WH6809-04-13432-13433, *Presidential Recordings Digital Edition* [Johnson Telephone Tapes: 1968, ed. Kent B. Germany, Nicole Hemmer, and Ken Hughes] (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2014–).

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Full information about this conversation: ["He'll Stop the Bombing if Elected"](#)